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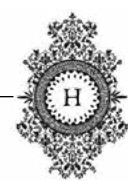
You're a Better You Thanks to Online School

Ursheille Vasantharaj
STUDENT LIFE

Ever since our not-so-recent transition to online school, it has often been quite difficult to look on the bright side. Most of us are holed up in our rooms, staring at a laptop screen for hours on end. Our days went from fun nights out to quiet nights in. Even though we don't know when life will go back to normal, it could do us some good to move away from the "life-on-pause" narrative. Our lives aren't on pause, our lives are just different at the moment. With these differences come some great new advantages that we may be overlooking during our wait for in-person school to resume. I'm here to give you a fresh perspective on the awesome new skills you have already gained through online learning and offer some tips to kick that academic FOMO to the curb.

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1. Head's up Silicon Valley, new tech experts are headed your way!

Before this pandemic hit, my technological skills were not so savvy. My solution to almost every problem was to power off, power on, and hope for the best. Now that we have been in the realm of online school for some time, our tech skills have definitely evolved. Whether you have become a split-screen digital genius, or you have finally learned how to unmute on Zoom, it's progress nonetheless. These skills will come in handy, especially since the workplace has now grown to embrace technology and working remotely. Thanks to online school, your newly developed computer skills could help you snag that dream job you've had your heart set on.

2. Tidying up with Marie Kondo U of T Students

We have all inevitably picked up organizational skills while learning online. Staying organized has become a lifeline for us ever since the onus to stay on top of due dates, emails, and those dreaded discussion posts became increasingly daunting. We have had to establish our own routines and create order in times that feel like chaos. Maybe you jotted down a reminder on a sticky note today? Or maybe you allotted some time to virtually chat with a friend before class? Online learning has taught us how to expertly balance school, work, family, and friends all with the power of organization. This transferable skill will help in all aspects of life, even after in-person learning resumes.

3. Typing! Typing! Typing!

Written communication is another important skill that we are constantly developing during our time with online school. We communicate via email and other written platforms more often now than ever before. Courses have also taken a writing-intensive approach in which creating multiple discussion posts a week has become the norm. Writing—or should I say, typing—has become one of the keys to online school survival. Online learning may be frustrating at times, but it has inevitably sharpened our writing skills. Online school has challenged us to practise writing in various ways to gather and share information in this primarily digital time. The written communication skills that we gain will serve as a valuable asset as we continue in both academia as well as the workplace.

4. Be your own cheerleader!

Humans are social creatures, and we often rely heavily on external motivators, like competition, to keep us on track. Online learning has forced us to become more independent and rely on and challenge ourselves to remain motivated, a skill that will always remain valuable. As students, we are learning how to be independent. When lectures are recorded and we can't have any late-night study sessions with our friends, the desire to procrastinate is stronger than ever. Online learning for these past few semesters has certainly challenged us to stay on track and fight the urge to put off tasks. Independence and self-motivation keep us sharp, efficient, and help us reach our goals.

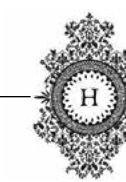
Hopefully, this optimistic look at the advantages of virtual learning helps to make online school a little easier to manage. However, we cannot ignore the fact that online learning comes with its own challenges, like academic FOMO that impacts mental health. When school first transitioned online back in March of last year, I always had a looming feeling that I was missing something. Whether it be an assignment, announcement, or even just an email, I had an irrational fear that the entire course structure had changed in the two minutes since I last checked Quercus. Some of you may still feel this

way, but thankfully there are many great ways to stay organized and take care of your mental health when academic FOMO is strong.

1. Physical agendas are arguably the best organizational tool to put your mind at ease during these stressful times. Use one to keep track of important dates, plan out your days, and schedule worry-free time to enjoy doing things that aren't school-related—yes, organization will free up time to do things you love. Not to mention, crossing out a task or ticking a box on a to-do list is incredibly satisfying!
2. Another tip is to separate your school life from your personal life. This may feel difficult to accomplish, but even the small act of not attending lectures while in bed can help prevent burnout. Drawing a line between the two worlds by creating boundaries helps take care of your mental health. Try to designate zones or times for school and personal life so the two don't end up feeling like one.
3. My third tip is to take breaks. This may sound redundant but taking breaks can actually improve your efficiency. Whether you want to try your hand at the Pomodoro technique or make a goal to go outside once a day, taking a break will ease your mind. Give yourself some time every day to step away from screens and schoolwork, even if it is just for 10 minutes. Remember, it's not just our devices that need to recharge often! ♦



Forward



How We Play

A New Approach to Varsity Sports During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Krizia Tarantino

STUDENT LIFE

A comprehensive look at how Canadian and American student-athletes have adapted to and been affected by COVID-19 regulations in their sports.

The COVID-19 pandemic has and continues to alter the course of our daily life as we have had to adapt to new normals: mask-wearing, reduced capacity in buildings, and the constant flux of being in lockdown and being reopened. However, a neglected conversation is how student-athletes have been impacted by the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the immediate shutdown of all varsity sports across Canada and the United States in 2020.

With no word regarding whether varsity sports would return for the 2020 season, many varsity athletes continued to train under new COVID guidelines. Unfortunately, for varsity athletes in Canada, USports

cancelled all sports for the remainder of the 2020 season. The United States, however, reinstated their 2020 season in the division II conference of the NCAA.

To understand which new rules and restrictions were made in light of the pandemic and how they have affected student-athletes performance in school and in play, the Herald reached out to two student-athletes from Canada and the United States: Mikayla Ford from the University of Toronto Women's Soccer program and Indiana Rotondo from the Mars Hill University (located in North Carolina) Basketball program.

Adapting to New Normals

Mikayla Ford highlighted the difficulty of training with a mask, reduced numbers at practices, loss of extra facilities, and the inability to find a consistent pattern as restrictions in Toronto fluctuate. She found the experience of adapting to these new normals difficult. When asked how much the pandemic has impacted her and her sport, she said, "So much. All summer play was cancelled, which means we didn't have a summer season. Our winter practices were also cut short because of the shutdown. With new restrictions, we

had to do our workouts and practices in the dome or under the bleachers with our masks on, which was very difficult."

However, in speaking to Indiana, his experience with COVID and adapting to new normals was quite different. Indiana explained how gym access was limited throughout the season, making it difficult to train. Adapting to this new normal was not easy and it progressively got worse from there: he contracted COVID-19. When asked about how the pandemic has impacted his sport, he said, "We were lucky enough to play; but I haven't been cleared yet to play because of COVID and post-COVID effects." He further explained that playing basketball during a pandemic, after contracting the virus, made him question if it was worth it to continue to play basketball and risk his health again.

Academics

While training during the pandemic has been difficult, Mikayla and Indiana also talked about their experience at school.

Mikayla explained that COVID and the inability to play soccer allowed her to take on more academic-related activities. However, she noted how difficult it was to destress after hours of lecture. She said, "Not having that stress relief from regular practice and social interaction really took a toll on me mentally." Soccer alleviated the stress of busy school days, but the pandemic took that away from her. She now has to find a new way to destress.

While Mikayla speaks about the difficulty of finding a

consistent distressing pattern during the pandemic, Indiana, on the contrary, found his working habits to be the exact same. When

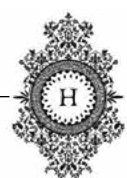
asked how the pandemic has affected school, he said, "It really hasn't. My study habits are still the same, not much has changed."

Looking Forward

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the way varsity athletes play their sports. The enforced restrictions have made it difficult for them to train and find a consistent pattern. Despite the difficulties 2020 brought, many varsity athletes are hopeful that the 2021 season will resume. Mikayla said the Women's Soccer program expects to play in the fall. She said, "All in all, the team is going full speed ahead and is expecting to start the 2021 season strong." Mikayla and Indiana highlighted the difficulties of playing varsity sports during a pandemic. However, because of the pandemic, they were able to focus solely on school and their future goals: getting into their Master's programs. Despite the hardships they encountered in 2020, they are hopeful for what the future brings. ♦



Despite the difficulties 2020 brought, many varsity athletes are hopeful that the 2021 season will resume. — Krizia Tarantino



Advice from a Graduating Student

Lessons Learned, Regrets, and Highlights

Anna Pan

STUDENT LIFE

After four bittersweet years, my time at the University of Toronto is finally coming to an end. During the rigorous semesters, each class felt like a million years. However, looking back, my undergraduate days flew by almost too quickly.

As COVID-19 continues to spread, restrictions on daily life seem to extend endlessly. While I want to remain optimistic, I can't help but dread my impending graduation. Following a year of online school, virtual convocation has lost all novel or appealing qualities. Although I accomplished a significant educational goal, the inability to celebrate my achievement with friends and family dampens my whole undergraduate experience. After all, walking across the stage to receive my diploma in a cap and gown is part of what makes the hardships "worth" it.

Moreover, staying in school feels safer than facing the bleak prospects of such a tough labour market. Any graduating student can tell you about the nightmare of job hunting in a pandemic. In university, the curriculum dictates an exact formula for success; whereas in the real world, I have no rubric for guidance. Compared to shouldering immense financial pressures and crushing existential anxiety, I would much prefer schoolwork stress.

Yet, there is always a bright side. Now that I'm graduating, I can reflect upon my university career to acknowledge my shortfalls and reminisce about good times. Throughout my degree, I have struggled, and I have flourished. Moving to Canada as a naïve and overconfident freshman, I planned out my university years down to the courses. Nonetheless, the unpredictability of life has a way of humbling oneself. Despite my frustrations with the current circumstances, hoping my "wisdom" can help even one person gives me motivation. Without further ado, here are a few things I now know that I wish someone told me earlier.

1. Self-Discipline is Self-Care

In my first and second year, whenever I wanted to make an impulse purchase, pig-out on fast food, or procrastinate on an assignment, I would think: "Treat yourself, you deserve this after working so hard." I've come to realize that this rhetoric is deceptively harmful. The idea that perseverance should be rewarded with letting yourself go creates unhealthy expectations. These "bad" practices become your extrinsic motivation for completing "good" tasks: If I work out now, I can have cake later. If I study now, I can binge Netflix later, and so on. Slowly, you lose your intrinsic drive for goals and the instances of "treating yourself" increase in frequency until they are no longer special occasions.

We really should flip the narrative. Self-discipline is the best way to "treat yourself." Having a good sleep schedule, eating nutritious foods, working productively, exercising to stay energized, and planning quality social time are all ways you can practice self-care. Starting university, I was thrust into so much freedom with no one to supervise me. It didn't take long to fall into bad habits. Now, I know from experience that wolfing down a family-sized bag of chips will make me feel greasy and fatigued, which means I'll nap and mess up my sleep schedule. Forging a robust lifestyle routine and sticking to it will not only improve your physical health but also strengthen your willpower. And having that enhanced mental fortitude will benefit you for the rest of your life.

2. Know Your Deadlines and Plan Accordingly

Taking five courses a semester means keeping track of an insane number of weekly quizzes, midterms, papers, group projects, and presentations. Each semester, after all my courses release their syllabi, I compile a list of all my assessments, in descending order by due date. Additionally, I add in all my extracurricular commitments, such as ICSS events I intend to facilitate. This way, I know exactly what's coming up and I can plan ahead. If there are multiple assignments due on the same date, I can work on some earlier to reduce my workload. For larger assignments, I can set sub-deadlines to allow myself plenty of revision time. Based on my list, I can also make Writing Center appointments to get support for submitting my best work. Preparing in advance and spreading out my responsibilities has been a key strategy for managing my stress levels.

3. Take Care of Your Body

Everyone knows that health is important. However, most university students in the prime of their youth don't take health too seriously. It took ignoring my body and almost losing a kidney for me to realize that you CANNOT DO ANYTHING without good health. These days, campus discussions seem to focus on mental health. While I fully recognize the necessity of mental wellbeing, I also want to remind you not to neglect physical health. Did you know your calcium intake before age 20 determines if your bones fracture in old age? Or that skipping breakfast is linked to overeating and obesity? It is so important to take care of your body when you are still young to prevent years of discomfort later in life. Try your best to eat balanced meals, take multivitamins (especially Vitamin D and Calcium), drink water instead of soda, floss your teeth, follow a skincare regimen, and exercise every day. I cannot stress enough how crucial it is to maintain your health. Only after losing your health will you realize how much you took it for granted.

Another component of bodily care is working on your physical appearance. As vain as it sounds, giving myself a "glow up" has helped my confidence and mental health tremendously. Living a healthy lifestyle helps you look better in addition to feeling vitalized. For example, eating lots of fibre nurtures your gut microbiome, which improves dull and tired skin. Simultaneously, aim to incorporate personal grooming into your daily routine. Getting ready for the day is one of the best ways I switch into productive mode.

Get Your Money's Worth for Insurance

Relating to the previous point, all U of T students pay \$400 a year for Studentcare insurance. Since you are already paying the fees, you might as well get your money's worth and maximize using your coverage. Your insurance pays (fully or partially) for teeth cleanings, tooth fillings, prescription eyewear,

hormonal birth control, IUDs, vaccinations, physiotherapy, psychiatrist appointments, massage therapy, and so much more. The [Studentcare website](#) provides detailed information on what is covered. I usually submit claims via the Studentcare app and receive reimbursements within three business days. Do yourself a favour and get acquainted with the healthcare benefits so that you can enjoy them while they last.

4. Clean as If You Lived Alone

If you are like most students, living with roommates will be a part of your university experience. While chore delegation seems simple, people ultimately have different living habits. I've seen so much time and energy wasted on roommate conflicts about cleaning. The best piece of advice is to treat

living with roommates as if you lived by yourself.

If you lived alone, you would have sole responsibility for all the chores. So, even if it is your roommate's turn to take out the trash, just let

it go and do it yourself. This does not mean hold a grudge against your roommates for making you do all the work. Instead, change your perspective and be grateful that they sometimes pitch in to help. If you have a high standard for cleanliness, don't expect others to meet you. Rather, clean your home based on your preferences as if you lived on your own.

5. Learn About Personal Finance

In all honesty, this is still something I am working on. Entering university was the first time I had complete control over all my money. It was also when I started earning some money for myself. While I never made any extravagant purchases, I also didn't manage my finances all that well either. Apply for a student credit card as soon as you can so that you can accumulate your credit score. Set up a registered Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) to secure your savings. Look into GICs, ETFs, cryptocurrency, and stock portfolios to grow your wealth. Create monthly budgets, and track your spending and student

debt. Personal finance is a lifelong project, but it is super important to build the foundations early on.

6. Good Grades Don't Mean Much

I say this as someone who has a generally desirable GPA: grades don't mean shit. Obviously don't fail your courses and try to achieve your best. However, don't assign too much personal value to your grades. They are just a number that quantifies your performance for a few months. That's it. Getting a bad grade is always fixable (trust me, I've gone from almost failing to getting an A+), and even if you don't end up with the outcome you hoped for, any grade is so minuscule in the grand scheme of things. I don't think I've had any more opportunities than someone with a lower GPA than me. Contrarily, I've seen lots of people with lower GPAs thrive on the job market. Most job applications nowadays don't even ask for your transcript. Concentrate on broadening your horizon, building a social network, and learning soft skills.

7. Talk About Your Problems

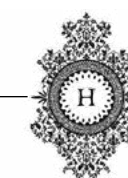
I spent way too much time in first and second year keeping my emotions bottled up and spiralling down into self-pity and self-hatred. We all know that others deal with their own problems, but we often forget we are only seeing a superficial fraction of their lives. Sharing your frustrations encourages others to reciprocate, thereby fostering a deeper connection. I used to have really bad anxiety, but I gradually overcame my fears after countless candid conversations with my friends. Confiding in others always lifts a weight off my chest, and I find that I mentally function better afterwards. Taking the first step and being vulnerable is not easy, but it is well worth the effort.

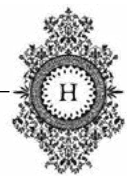
8. Introspect and Think Long-Term

Echoing my previous sentiments, I find it really helpful to reorient myself with introspection once in a while. It's good to acknowledge your thoughts and emotions head-on. I used to have all this pent-up anger where I blamed the universe for my problems. Through introspection, I truly realized that I caused a lot of my own problems. Seeing yourself clearly, identifying your feelings, and evaluating what you like/don't like can help you set long-term goals. It's important to frame your introspection in relation to your entire life because that can help you gauge the importance of events. For example, getting a bad midterm grade is so temporary in a life span of 80 years, but becoming a more tolerant person can help you make friendships that last a lifetime.

9. Enjoy Yourself

Soon, you will be in my shoes, wondering where all the time went. I forged all my best U of T memories by doing stupid crazy things with my friends. 10 years from now, that will be what I remember, not any assignment grade. I regret not going out more and prioritizing my social life before the pandemic hit. Now that my entire friend group is graduating and moving across the world, who knows when we will all be in one place again. If the pandemic ever ends, make the most of opportunities to have fun with friends. Cherish your undergraduate experience, and enjoy yourself while you still can. ♦





Summer Doesn't Have to be a Bummer!

Ideas on how to Enjoy the Upcoming Summer Safely

Mackenzie Da Silva

STUDENT LIFE

As 2020 rapidly draws to a close, the holidayWith midterms in the rearview, finals in sight, and increasingly sunny days, summer is so close you can practically taste it! But as the pandemic persists, this summer might taste a little different than we had dreamt it would during last year's lockdown. While this isn't our first COVID-19 summer, it is important to remain respectful of the protocols in place and to listen to what our public-health advisors are telling us.

However, one thing for certain is that after a year of powering through potential Zoom connection issues and braving breakout rooms, a summer of fun is in order! Depending on what stage of our province's colour-coded lockdown plan we are in come June, here are some COVID-safe activities that I enjoyed last summer and ones I hope to try out this year.

If you are anything like me and spent the majority of the year indoors leaning over a laptop, the outdoors are going to be your antidote to tech-neck! Tired of twiddling your thumbs with your family in the living room? Take family time outside! Nothing beats a scenic walk, with a stop for a sundae or a picnic in the park with your loved ones.

Speaking of loved ones, dating during a pandemic can feel discouraging, especially when trying to plan dates for a new relationship. But it doesn't have to be! Elevate your picnics in the park by packing playing cards. UNO is a great ice breaker and finding out whether or not they play a +2 on top of a +2 says a lot about their character. But if cards aren't your thing, bring some paper and pencils to the park and have a socially-distanced drawing competition. Pick out a Bob Ross tutorial and follow along as you get to know one another!

Or ditch the dates and play with your pals! The fresh air combined with friendly competition will ease any awkwardness with first dates or friends that you haven't seen in a while and is sure to spark lively conversation.

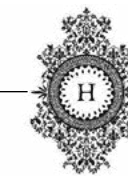
Had enough of being cooped up indoors with family or roommates and just looking to spend a quiet day out alone? Look no further! A friend of mine last year suggested the perfect plan for every introvert looking to treat themselves to a self-care day. If non-essential businesses such as bookshops and cafés are open come summertime, I suggest heading to your local coffee shop one sunny morning, grabbing a cup of coffee, and spending the day exploring various BMVs—Books, Music, Video stores—in the area. I promise you that browsing used books and reading is the remedy for skimming digital PDFs all year.

Last, make even the most mundane activities fun this summer by punctuating weekly errands with warm weather and good music. Spotify allows members to create collaborative playlists with friends, so start up a feel-good playlist with your best buddies and have fun grooving down the arrowed grocery aisles.

These are just a couple of ideas to get all of us excited for whatever summer 2021 brings. No matter what stage of lockdown we fall into come June, I hope these suggestions show you that this summer does not have to be a bummer. All you need to do is be safe, get creative, and have fun! ♦



Summer



Gender in a Year

Loes Streppel
FEATURE

I view gender
As a beautiful animal
That people often take for a walk on
a leash
And might enter in some odd contest
To try to win strange prizes.
~ Hafiz, from *I Heard God Laughing: Poems of Hope and Joy*.

Last summer, I bought my first binder. I had passed it off as a “fashion choice” that would allow me to wear button-ups without the annoying gap in the fabric caused by my chest. “*I simply wanted to dress more androgynous*,” I told myself. Nothing to look into there. I was only wearing it when the outfit asked for a little less *oomph* in the front.

However, it wasn't long until I began turning to the binder more regularly, wearing it under bulky sweaters and even when I knew I wasn't going out or seeing anyone that day. It made me feel more secure when walking past my reflection or looking down at my chest.

As someone who cares extremely little for their own health, I predictably began wearing the binder longer than advised and often fell asleep with it on. I'd wake up to bruises on my ribs and fabric burns on my back from the tight cloth rubbing against my skin. I began lashing out at my mirror, frustrated at my own reflection. My hips, my ass, my chest, they were all wrong. They felt foreign to me. Too prominent. Too feminine.

Too...not me.

Journal entry: November 19th, 2020

Is it more official now that I'm writing it down? To formalize it? If I'm the only one who will ever read this, then what am I achieving by writing it down? Anyways, I think (am pretty sure) I might be non-binary. I don't know what I'm going to do now though, I guess this is the part where you begin to tell people? I don't want to do the whole coming-out thing again. It's exhausting.

Towards the end of November, I decided to articulate these feelings to my roommate. A week later, I had put my pronouns in my bio. I was euphoric, excited about this new development in my life. Of course, there were ups and downs with my family. Well, uh, mostly...all downs. But that's all very depressing, so I won't talk about it. “Repression is key to a healthy mindset,” I say.

Journal Entry: December 7th, 2020

Sorry, it's been a while. You're non-binary now, put the pronouns in the bio and everything, go us. Decided that I didn't really have to come out since I'm not seeing anyone in person anyways. I kind of just wait for people to either bring it up after they see my bio or correct them when they misgender me. I did stop going by Mar though, change my name to Loes. I kind of always

wanted to go by Loes. Mar never fit right. Mar: Mar: Maaaar. No. It's not a huge change, going by the second half of your name, but it feels right.

Of course, with every identity crisis comes a Google and social media deep dive. In my case, it was of non-binary representation on social media. Something which began as an exciting world I longed to be part of but slowly turned toxic. Representation was framed, as it often is on social media, in unachievable standards.

My timeline slowly filled with people who looked like they were born to wear a suit like nothing looked more natural than a blazer. Their slim frames lacked all the parts of myself I had begun to hate. No one would look at them and immediately assume their gender. In comparison to them, I just looked...wrong. Like a child who'd rummaged through their parents' wardrobe in an attempt to look “grown-up” but instead was just told to stop pretending.

I became fixated on the idea that, if I wanted to appear legitimate as non-binary, I had to present as masculine as possible and hide all parts of myself that are considered feminine. I could never wear a dress, a skirt. Makeup was acceptable, but only in a “masculine style,” whatever that meant. I became overwhelmed with these restrictions and unspoken rules. I still am. It's hard to break out of gender roles, and it's even harder to feel comfortable in your identity when the entire world perceives you as someone else. I try to stay off social media.

Journal Entry: March 5th, 2021

Meeting with my professor today. Kept referring to me with the wrong pronouns in front of the rest of the research team. Mom and dad were in the room, I couldn't correct her or say anything and

no one else was correcting her. So now I'm in a park crying on a swing set while the sunsets. Very aesthetic trauma.

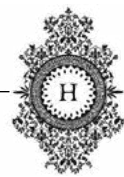
For me, this marked the first time I got openly misgendered. Its impact made me realize just how important my identity had become to me over the year. Not to be a cliché, but *ya really don't know what weight you have placed on your gender till it's gone*. It f*cking sucks. Sure, there had been incidents before. But when it's just your friends, there isn't the same pressure. If anything, you make a fun drinking game out of it! Hard to ask your boss to take shots in the middle of a meeting.

The dysphoria comes and goes. And I am still working through some deeply ingrained and internalized conceptions of gender and identity. I am still processing how I understand being non-binary and trying to move away from it being anything other than deeply personal to the individual. There is no blueprint for identity. As I write this, I think back to myself last summer and the excitement I'd felt when putting on my first binder. I think about where I am now, and it's hard to not feel just a little optimism for the future. ♦



There is no blueprint for identity. — Loes Streppel





Hooked: Podcast Recommendations

Catherine Dumé

ARTS AND CULTURE

I remember the first time I heard about podcasts; I was under the perception that podcasts were just about people complaining about life or sharing the popular news. As a person with a hearing impairment, it was difficult to hear the speakers well, so I never saw the appeal. Yet over the years, 2020 in particular, there has been a spike in the popularity of podcasts. I have been able to find podcasts that I just can't get enough of, so here are my top five favourite podcasts on Spotify!



SERIAL

Photo credit: This American Life

SERIAL

I can't talk about podcasts without the first one that sparked my love for the medium. Over the course of several seasons, the host, reporter Sarah Koenig, points out the flaws of the American Judicial System. The first episode covers the R v. Adnan Case from 1999, where she tries to determine if Adnan was truly the murderer of his ex-girlfriend or the victim of a shoddy justice system. After listening to all 12 episodes, you'll instantly want to become either a detective as you try to solve this "unsolved" case or a lawyer as you rise to his defence.

POPCORN CULTURE

Are you a fan of Disney, Marvel, Star Wars, Pixar and Harry Potter? You'll love this podcast hosted by the YouTubers SuperCarlinBrothers, Ben and Johnathon Carlin. These two brothers from Roanoke, Virginia are all about celebrating your fandom. On their channel, they offer fun theories on each fandom. However, recently they just started their new podcast *Popcorn Culture*, which is an extension of their channel where they talk about current shows and films, plus funny jokes, coyote trivia, personal stories, life hacks, and reflections.



Photo credit: SuperCarlinBrothers

THE FULL FAT PODCAST

If you have been watching Marvel's newest show, *WandaVision*, on Disney+ and are wondering what in the world you just watched, *The Full Fat Podcast*, hosted by the Full Fat Videos Crew on YouTube, have been watching each episode and reacting to it while providing some clarity to fans of the show. They not only explain the MCU references for new Marvel fans but also do a deep dive into the comic Easter eggs as well.

THE FULL FAT
PODCAST

Photo credit: Full Fat Videos

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

Myths and Legends is a podcast where Jason Weiser tells the dramatic tales of folklore, urban legends, and myths across the world. I assure you that after giving it a listen, your childhood will be ruined, but your curiosity will be piqued.



Photo credit: Jason Weiser

ASK AMELIA PODCAST

Finally, I can't talk about podcasts without including my own. I know, I know, such shameful promotion! Yet, if you are a new writer or a writer who is eager for some new tips and tricks to strengthen your creative muscle, the *Ask Amelia Podcast* is for you. After 10 years of writing and a bunch of published stuff under my belt, I answer your writing questions and invite guests to talk about certain issues in writing! ♦



Ask
Amelia

WRITING, PUBLISHING & MORE

Photo credit: Amelia Arrows



The Sandman: Storytelling that Trancends Genre

Celine Sleiman

ARTS AND CULTURE

I started reading Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* with absolutely zero context. I'd read *Good Omens* and *American Gods*, so I was familiar with Gaiman's whimsical style and self-conscious humour, but I wasn't aware of the impact he'd had on the comic book industry or of *The Sandman*'s profound success. In truth, I saw a post about the upcoming Netflix adaptation and the dark, foreboding figure on the cover intrigued me enough to buy the first volume: *Preludes and Nocturnes*.

The story begins with Roderick Burgess, an ambitious occultist, who is trying to capture Death, one of the seven Endless beings that have existed since the beginning of time. The ritual doesn't go as planned, and Burgess finds himself the inadvertent captor of Death's younger brother: The Dream Lord Morpheus. Imprisoned for 60 years and stripped of the magic objects imbued with his power, Morpheus does not realize that his absence has been a catalyst for chaos in both the dreaming and waking worlds.

When he finally manages to escape, the Prince of Stories embarks on a quest to reclaim his lost power, encountering many familiar faces along the way. Fans of DC comics will recognize John Constantine, Dr. Doom, Martian Manhunter and the occasional Justice League reference. We are also introduced to a host of new, equally-riveting characters, including Lucifer Morningstar, Gaiman's deliciously wicked and unexpectedly polite incarnation of the devil.

The journey is reminiscent of a Homeric epic, complete

with a visit to the Underworld, divine intervention, and a less-than-perfect hero. Morpheus can be narcissistic, petty, and unforgiving, but his experience is a humbling one, and we witness his subtle change continue throughout the following nine volumes.

I picked up the next book almost immediately—not because the first one ended on some massive cliffhanger, but because the story is truly unique and I just had to know what happened. The characters sneak up on you, drawing you in with their witty banter and unresolved schemes. It is elegantly narrated, with just enough ambiguity to keep you guessing and just enough clarity to blend Gaiman's mythology seamlessly with our reality. It has elements of the uncanny, of Greek tragedy, and Arabic anthologies. It transcends genre.

Gaiman crafts an intricate web of characters, plot-points, and themes, with the Dream Lord at its very centre. Certain volumes are structured chronologically as Morpheus navigates the mortal plane or his dysfunctional family, while others function as inset-narratives, flashbacks of his past. In some volumes, like *The Doll's House* or *A Game of You*, Morpheus is not even the main character. Instead, he appears at the end of each issue, or he scarcely appears at all.

You might reach a point where you ask yourself, "Where is this going?" Have faith. Everything is connected, and when you do begin to connect the dots, when you start to see the invisible threads Gaiman has so cleverly weaved, it is nothing short of brilliant.

For those who enjoy audiobooks, audible has released the first part of *The Sandman* adaptation narrated by Neil Gaiman and a cast of actors, including Taron Egerton as Constantine, Kat Dennings as Death, Michael Sheen as Lucifer, and James McAvoy as the titular Dream. McAvoy captures Morpheus's dry humour and unexpected kindness perfectly, and the soundtrack provides a stunning backdrop for the talented cast. Although the production only covers volumes one to three, the series has been renewed for two more parts to complete the saga.

If the audiobook's speedy success is proof of anything, it's that *The Sandman* is timeless. The first issue debuted in 1988, and over thirty years later, it continues to be relevant. So my advice to anyone who loves a good story is simple: Read (or listen to) *The Sandman*. I promise you won't regret it. ♦



Photo credit: Ankita Chawla



Grammy 2021 Predictions

Tony Niu

ARTS AND CULTURE

Disclaimer: This article was written before The Grammys took place.

As the biggest Swiftie on Earth, I've been in a love-hate relationship with the Grammy Awards ever since her 2016 album, *Reputation*, was snubbed. However, despite some of Grammy's famous snubs over the years—Lorde's *Melodrama*, Beyoncé's *Lemonade*, Lana Del Rey's *Norman Fucking Rockwell!*, to name a few—they have yet to give an award to an undeserving artist.

This year's Grammy Award Show was pushed from January 31 to March 14 due to the deteriorating COVID-related situations in Los Angeles, which means we all had to wait another 1.5 months. But, on the bright side, I can personally write my own predictions for you. So, without further ado, here are some of my predictions in the fields that I'm a huge fan of.

Best New Artist: Megan Thee Stallion

As an award dedicated to the new artists of the year who have made a breakthrough in the music industry, this award has rarely failed its accuracy in predicting the winner's further success in the field, and I'm sure some of the previous winners could justify the weight of this award: John Legend (2006), Amy Winehouse (2008), Adele (2009).

This year, Phoebe Bridgers, Noah Cyrus, Megan Thee Stallion, Kaytranada, and Doja Cat are nominated for this award. In the past year, they've all made mega-hits that grabbed people's attention. In my opinion, the biggest competitors for this award are Megan Thee Stallion and Doja Cat; one made hits such as "Savage" and "Body," while the latter made a killer album, *Hot Pink*, including her hit, "Say So."

However, only one lucky artist can take home this trophy, and I would choose Megan Thee Stallion not only because she's also nominated for Record of the Year for "Savage," but for her chart-topping hit "WAP" that came out in August 2020.



Photo credit: Ben Rosser/BFA

Record of the Year: "Don't Start Now" by Dua Lipa

This award is given to the best record of the year in terms of production and mixing quality. Previous years' winners—"Uptown Funk" (2016), "This is America" (2019), and "Bad Guy" (2020)—have demonstrated their impeccable abilities in engineering a track that's compact, cohesive, and clean. As a producer myself, these are some of my role models when it comes to crafting high-quality songs.

The nominees this year have all made top-notch tracks, including last year's Record of the Year winner, Billie Eilish, with her new track "Everything I Wanted," produced by last year's Producer of the Year winner, her brother, FINNEAS. However, her competitors are also bringing bangers, including "Savage" by Megan Thee Stallion featuring Beyoncé, "Circles" by Post Malone, "Rockstar" by DaBaby featuring Roddy Ricch, and "Don't Start Now" by Dua Lipa.

For this award, I'm all for Dua Lipa's "Don't Start Now." Not only does it have the bounciest bass like a thread throughout the song, but the retro-guitar, synth, drums, and vocal arrangement also complement each other and make the song into a hit.

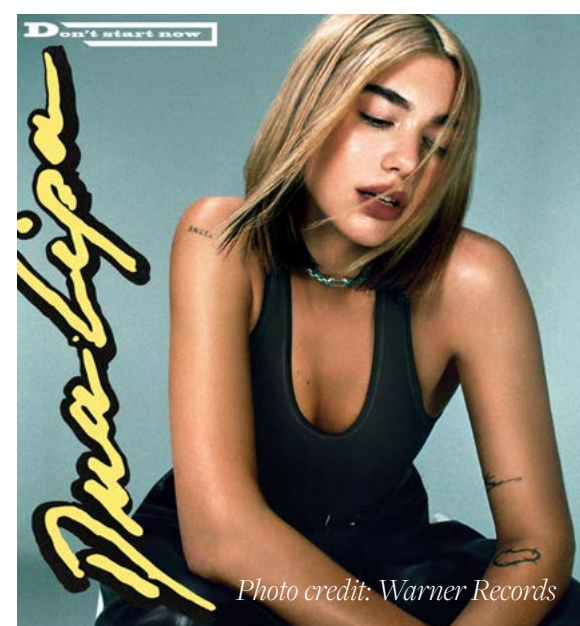


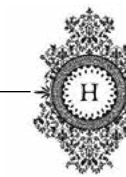
Photo credit: Warner Records

Song of the Year: "Don't Start Now" by Dua Lipa

This category tends to overlap with Record of the Year, for example, Adele's "Hello" (2017), Billie Eilish's "Bad Guy" (2020), and Sam Smith's "Stay With Me" (2015) all won both Record and Song of the Year. The difference between Record of the Year and Song of the Year is that while the former is awarded to the engineers, the latter is awarded to the songwriter(s). This year, the Grammy's nominated songs reflect the political-social movements in the past year, like "I Can't Breathe" by H.E.R. and "Black Parade" by Beyoncé. Former Song of the Year winner, Billie Eilish, is nominated again for her track "Everything I Wanted." Also, unsurprisingly, Dua Lipa's "Don't Start Now" is nominated in this category, in addition to its nomination in Record of the Year.

If the Grammys follow the same patterns as previous years, Dua Lipa might win both Song of the Year and Record of the Year. However, songwriting genius, Taylor Swift, who is the most nominated female songwriter in this category with 5 nominations in total, is also nominated in this category with her chart-topping song "cardigan," co-written with Aaron Dessner from The National.

For this category, I would pick Dua Lipa because of her song's relatively bigger commercial success over the other songs nominated in the category.



Album of the Year: *folklore* by Taylor Swift

Now, this is the category that mildly upset me for the longest time due to the snub of The Weeknd's phenomenal album, *After Hours*. In an ideal world, without his previous beef with the Grammy committee, he would definitely get a nomination in this category, and the competition would be between him and Taylor Swift. But, without The Weeknd's album, the biggest competitors in this category fall between Taylor Swift's *folklore*, an adventurous alternative/indie-pop album, and Dua Lipa's *Future Nostalgia*, an 80s-inspired pop album filled with punchy bass lines and catchy tunes.

Dua Lipa put out her sophomore album last year in March, capturing all the essence of pop music, including punchy bass lines throughout the album, as well as many disco-inspired tracks that you could totally dance to. Then, Taylor dropped *folklore* as a surprise album—which she had never done before—in July, earning her a No.1 debut single, as well as a chart-topping album on the Billboard 200 for weeks. Both of these albums received universal acclaim on *Metacritic*, and both also received high scores on *Pitchfork*. However, compared to *folklore*, in my opinion, Dua Lipa's work lacks meaningful depths in her songs, but it works out for the album since it's not an album with storytelling or big ballads, while Swift's work paints a complete picture, filled with genius songwriting and brilliant lyrics.

Now you might be thinking, this situation seems similar to the time Bruno Mars won his first Album of the Year with *24K Magic* in 2018, competing with songwriting genius Lorde's album *Melodrama*. Then, by putting Jacob Collier's *Djesse Vol.3* in the mix this year, the competition suddenly resembles Daft Punk winning Album of the Year in 2014 with *Random Access Memories* over Taylor Swift's *Red*, her country-pop album before her full transition to official pop music.

Some of the other nominees in this category this year also showed promise in their work: Jhené Aiko's *Chilombo* is cohesive, but lacks commercial success, similar to Coldplay's *Everyday Life*, as most people might not even remember that Coldplay dropped a new album last year. Black Pumas' *Black Pumas (Deluxe Edition)* is filled with classical soul elements, and it might surprise you how good it actually is; while it definitely deserves the nomination, it also lacks big hits or commercial success. Springing off his previous Album of the Year nomination for *beerbongs & bentleys* in 2019, Post Malone's *Hollywood's Bleeding* is another demonstration of his hit-making abilities; this is his second Album of the Year nomination, filled with hits such as "Circles," "Wow.," and "Take What You Want." While this album definitely deserves its nomination, it's what you'd expect from Post Malone based on his previous works, so it lacks that surprise element.

No matter how you look at it, this year is going to be a difficult year to predict the winners. But, based on the overall critique, commercial success, and cohesiveness of songwriting and production quality, Taylor might just win her third Album of the Year, which will make her the first woman and the fourth act to do so—after Stevie Wonder, Paul Simon, and Frank Sinatra. But, regardless of what happens, this year's Grammy Awards will not disappoint you or any other music enthusiasts. Here's to hoping that my predictions come true!

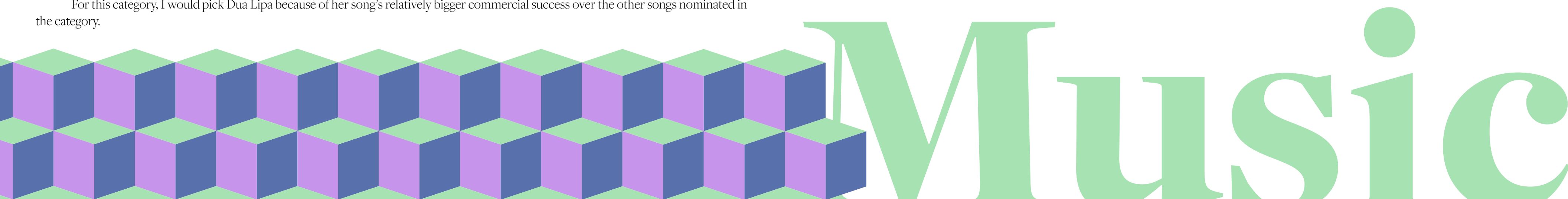


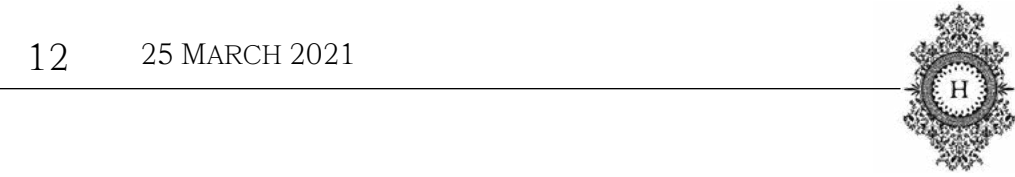
Photo credit: Republic Records

Other Categories: Lightning Rounds

Below, I'll list some of the predictions in other categories that I'm also a huge fan of, without any lengthy explanations.

- **Best Pop Solo Performance: "Don't Start Now" by Dua Lipa**
Definitely NOT Justin Bieber's "Yummy."
- **Best Progressive R&B Album: *Chilombo* by Jhené Aiko**
Given the nomination in Album of the Year, I wouldn't be surprised if she takes this trophy home.
- **Best Pop Vocal Album: *folklore* by Taylor Swift**
Again, definitely NOT Justin Bieber's *Changes*.
- **Best R&B Performance: "Black Parade" by Beyoncé**
- **Best Pop Duo/Group Performance: "Exile" by Taylor Swift featuring Bon Iver**
I'm sorry readers, but I don't think BTS will take this trophy home.
- **Best Melodic Rap Performance: "The Box" by Roddy Ricch**
Every year, this category has so many good songs, but only one can take home the trophy, and I choose Roddy Ricch.
- **Best Alternative Album: *Fetch the Bolt Cutters* by Fiona Apple**
One of the most critically acclaimed albums of the year.
- **Best Song Written for Visual Media: "No Time to Die" by Billie Eilish**
Hands down, the best song that was written for visual media in this past year!
- **Producer of the Year, Non-Classical: Jack Antonoff**





Thank You

Dear reader, thank you.

Cynthia Zheng
POEM

To be grateful is to create art.

*

That one spring
the smell of your mother’s warm noodle soup,
floating all the way to your icy-cold room
after a long, gloomy day.

That one summer
the ride back home,
singing along with your family to your favourite song
after a road trip from the intriguing unknown.

That one autumn
the pouring leaves and raindrops fall,
washing away the regrets you never dared to say out loud
after a quiet and much needed walk.

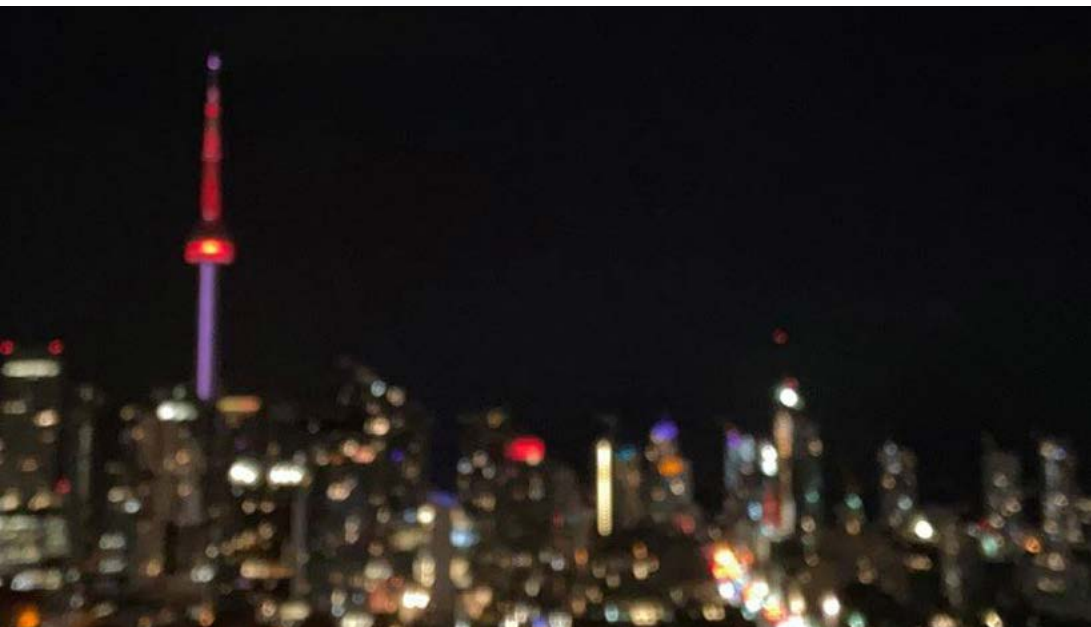
That one winter
the snowflakes tickle your winter coat,
moving ever so swiftly in the air
after you have finally let go of your inner fears.

*

The way the sun rises
for you to grab onto the pieces of today,
for you to start a puzzle anew.

The way the city screams your name
for you to hear loud and crystal clear,
for you to carry on.

The way the sun waves goodbye
for you to learn to let go of these pieces at midnight,



for you to build a new puzzle
tomorrow.
For now,
for you to sit with the moon and the stars.

For a brief moment,
silence shouts.

*

The way it feels
to embrace your favourite book in your arms,
flipping through the chapters
that take you to worlds—
ones you have yet to discover.

The way it feels
to embrace your loved ones (when it is safe to do so),
sharing joy, laughter, and perhaps a story
that bring you to tears—
all of which
you have been waiting for a long time.

The way it feels
to embrace your sad days,
pouring out your deepest sorrows
and
knowing that better days—
they are not so far away.

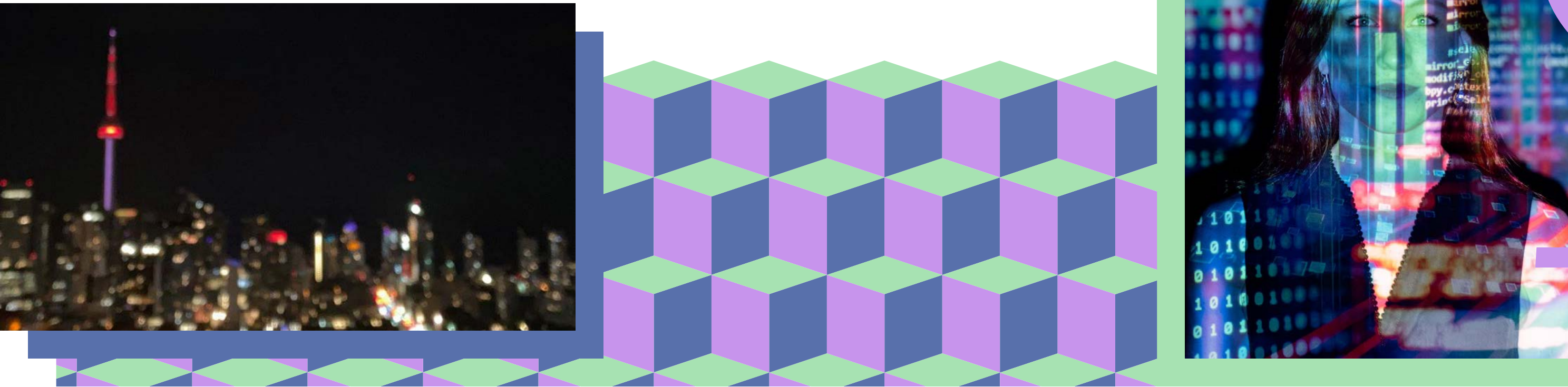
The way it feels
to embrace yourself,
holding onto both the learning curves and the high peaks
for they remind you and show you
how beautiful it is to be a work in progress—
all of the histories, wonders, and mysteries.

The way it feels
to embrace your art,
however you create it.

*

To create art is to be grateful.

Tell me—
how do you create? ♦



Instructions for MindScape

Rishibh Prakash
CREATIVE

Welcome, dear customer. Thank you for buying MindScape. At the forefront of alternate reality and immersion technology, we are confident that MindScape will allow you to create and explore worlds previously unimaginable, all from the comfort of your room! Please follow the instructions below to allow your MindScape to configure properly and begin your MindScape journey.

1. Please find a quiet space where you will not be disturbed for a minimum of 10 minutes. Sudden disturbances during the configuration or the synchronization process may lead to memory loss and/or severe damage to the brain.
2. Place the attached pieces on your temples and close your eyes.
3. You will fall into a deep state of unconsciousness for a few minutes. Disturbance at this stage can be harmful. You will awaken once configuration is complete.
4. After configuration, the MindScape module will cause your limbs to move. This temporary loss of control may be disturbing. Please remain calm, this is only a confirmation that the process was successful.
5. You may experience a temporary loss of memory and/or identity. Please remain calm, your memory and identity will be restored shortly.
6. Once the synchronization is complete, you will see a welcome message as well as a list of Terms & Conditions you must accept in order to continue.
7. As a first step, we recommend creating your avatar. An avatar is

how other MindScape users will see you. An avatar can look like anything you want, but note that by the Defamation Act of 2071, constructing an avatar to impersonate someone else is illegal. Free users may find some limits to customizability.

8. Next, we recommend creating your primary MindWorld. MindWorlds are simply custom virtual spaces made by our users. The use and appearance of these spaces is entirely defined by the creator(s). You will also have a primary MindWorld which is the space that other MindScape users will see when they call or visit you. An extra fee is required if you wish to add items related to copyrighted works in your MindWorld. This includes popular games, movies, shows, etc. Free users may find some limits to customizability.
9. After creating your avatar and MindWorld, we recommend adding some friends to your friend list. This will allow you to talk to them and visit their MindWorlds instantly. As a free MindScape user, you can add up to 5 friends to your friend list.
10. You're all set! Feel free to visit any of the publicly available MindWorlds, or create some of your own. As a free MindScape user, you can have up to 3 active MindWorlds, including your primary MindWorld.
11. As a free MindScape user, you may find your likes and dislikes slightly altered to match those of our sponsors. Upgrading to a Premium account will allow you to revert back to your original tastes.
12. As a free Mindscape user, you will need to spend a portion of your time watching some sponsored content. Some of your data may be shared with third parties in order to ensure that the content you receive is truly meant for you. This data may include age, sex, race, preferences, history, social relationships, etc.
13. Memories that have not been accessed in over a year may be deleted due to limited storage. If you have purchased a MindStorage unit, then these memories can be stored there. Note that while Premium MindScape users have unlimited storage, upgrading to Premium will not allow you to retrieve deleted memories.

Welcome to MindScape, an experience we *know* you'll enjoy. ♦



Create

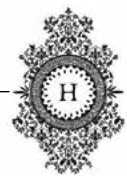


Photo Essay

Featuring My Friends and I's Stuffed Animals

Cindy Yan

CREATIVE



Meet Yolanda's teddy bears she got when she was about six years old; one of them was given to her by her brother's godfather. She then misplaced it for a while so her dad bought her the other one, and now they live as a pair! Yolanda's favourite part about them is how soft they are, and she likes their bows, too. They don't have names, but Yolanda likes to place them together so they don't get lonely.

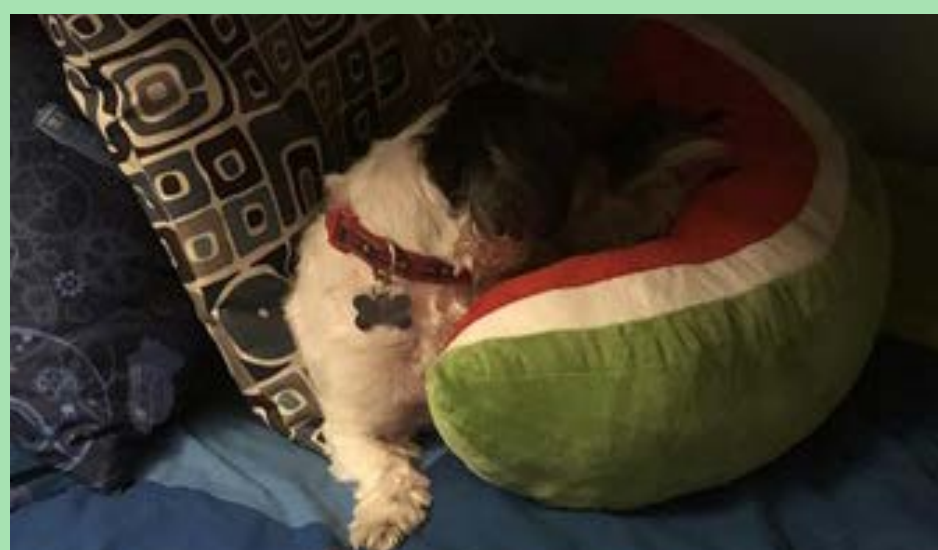
Here's Snorbert, Norbert for short! He's a crocheted teddy bear that I recently received from my friend; she included a pickle and a mini heart in the packaging as well! I love Norbert a lot, and I like to use him as my stress ball sometimes when I'm restless.



Here's Piggy, my own Pillow Pet! I love Piggy a lot!



This is Mira's watermelon pillow! It's the only stuffie she brought with her to university. "Every year, my family picks a theme and then all my cousins get each other gifts based on that theme," she explains. "In 2019, the theme was food pillows. It's a very cozy pillow actually and probably one of my favourite Christmas gifts I've ever gotten."



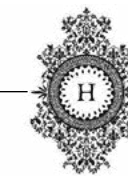
Here's Mira's dog on the same watermelon pillow!



Here's my friend's pink fish stuffie named Gilly! Look how she stands elegantly upon her great kingdom: a wide, smooth expanse of bedsheets.



Here are Danika's Pooh and Sophie! Pooh was her favourite character as a kid, and Sophie was named after the musical artist Sophie Xeon. They are, as Danika says, "good floofs."



This is Kelly's pillow named *sha gua*, the word for "dummy" in Chinese. She got it when she was really young, but she feels like she has always had it. "It's just really comforting to have something soft and cozy to hold when I feel stressed or upset about something," she says. "Once when we were really young, my brother and I got into an argument and he retaliated by marching up to my room and spitting on *sha gua*...I don't think I've ever been more upset in my life. Now, I just hug the pillow in my arms while studying or calling friends; it makes me feel really cozy and relaxed!"

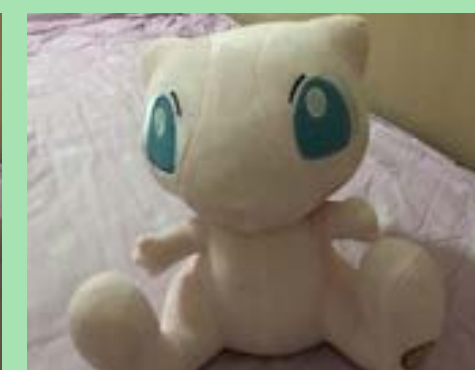


Beware, it's Bear, the fox! This stuffie's name is Bear, but Nicole's pretty sure he's a fox. Her boyfriend got it for her: "Cause of COVID we can't really see each other that much, so when CHM really hurts my soul, Bear comforts me instead!"

This is Anita's stuffy named Monty, short for Montague! He was a going away gift from her friends in Florida when she came to Toronto. Her baby cousin loves him and tries to eat his face whenever she comes to Anita's room, but Anita thinks it's cute so she lets it slide.



Raysa's Unnamed Ikea Panda... his name itself is a paradox. Mysterious!



These are Yona's Pokémon stuffies! The first is Alolan Vulpix, and the second one is Mew. She got them online from China about three years ago because she adores Pokémon. "I thought they were cute, so I bought them!"



Here's Ilian's furry bookmark, George! "George is a giraffe. He has travelled to many places with me. Notably, he went with me to Harry Potter world — he has a label with his name on it, but one of my favourite characters is George Weasley so the name was perfect," Ilian says. "I think I got him as a gift, but it's been so many years I don't remember the details. The important thing is he is the gift."

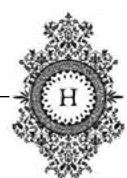


See Jasmine's Beanie Baby collection! "My Beanie Baby collection is a quintessential homage to the late '90s and early 2000s," she says. "Growing up as the youngest child in my family, I was heavily influenced by millennial culture, including this bear collection. My parents and sister would purchase Beanie Babies wherever they could find them. It's crazy how people thought these would cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars one day. If you're unaware of the rave, please just Google the Beanie Baby craze. These hold a special place in my heart and are truly the cutest bears ever made!"

Here's Lina's strawberry plushie! She got it a couple of years ago from her trip to Japan: "I had doubts about it at first because it was huge, and I was afraid I might not have the space to take it back with me...but the next day, before we left to the airport, we passed by the exact store and I had to get it. It's just way too soft and cute!" She thinks that it's definitely one of her best purchases; it's just so soft and she loves it!



And that's the end of our journey through stuffies! I hope you've learned something new today, discovered a new type of stuffed animal, or discovered that you really want to go out and buy another one! Cheers! ♦



Chinese Supermarket Egg Tarts

Hayley Vlcek & Anna Pan
RECIPE

Their flaky crust and creamy egg custard make egg tarts the perfect treat! Fresh tarts, warm out of the oven, are the best. However, they can be time-consuming and hard work to make. Follow our “cheater’s” recipe to get the perfect silky, delicious, and hassle-free tarts! Our secret ingredient is pre-made tart crusts from the Asian supermarket, C&C. Can’t find any tart crusts? Don’t fret, you can get creative with puff pastry or pre-made pie crust! ♦



Photos courtesy of Anna Pan

Ingredients (8 egg tarts)

- 4 egg yolks
- 180g whipping cream
- 140g milk
- 80g sugar
- 15g sweetened condensed milk
- 15g corn starch
- 8x egg tart shells from the Chinese Supermarket

Directions

- Preheat oven to 420°F
- Gently whisk together all the ingredients (minus the tart shells) in a bowl
- Pour the egg mixture through a strainer into another bowl
- Spread the tart shells on a baking tray (they don’t expand, so you can place them pretty close to one another)
- Ladle the egg mixture into the tart shells
- Bake the egg tarts for 20-30 mins
- Broil on high for ~3 mins, until the tart browns nicely

Tip: if you strain the egg mixture into any container with a spout, you will be able to directly pour it into the tart shells without a ladle.



St. Patrick’s Day Cupcakes

Jasmine Kara
RECIPE

You don’t have to find the end of the rainbow to reach tasty pots of gold! These St. Patrick’s Day cupcakes are delicious and made with a few simple ingredients.

So, show off your decorative cupcakes online with shamrock green icing, fluffy clouds, and rainbows this St. Patrick’s Day!

Tried the recipe? Send us your pictures! ♦



Vanilla Cupcake Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups of flour
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoons of salt
- 1/2 cup of unsalted butter (room temperature)
- 3/4 cup of sugar
- 2 eggs (room temperature)
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- *Optional: colourful sprinkles*

Frosting Ingredients

- 1/2 cup of unsalted butter (room temperature)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- 2 cups of icing sugar (sifted)
- 2 tablespoons of milk
- Green food colouring

Preparation

- Electric mixer
- Wooden spoon
- Whisk
- Bowl(s)
- Cupcake or muffin pan
- *Optional: Piping bag*
- *Optional: Cupcake liners*

Directions

Vanilla Cupcakes

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Add flour, baking powder, and salt into a bowl. Leave aside.
- In another bowl, mix sugar and butter with an electric mixer for approximately four minutes.
- Add eggs and vanilla extract into sugar and butter mixture.
- Incorporate dry ingredients in segments. Mix with a wooden spoon until wet and dry ingredients are fully combined.
- Stir in colourful sprinkles to batter.
- Pour batter into cupcake or muffin pan.
- Bake for 18–22 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.
- Allow to cool completely before decorating!

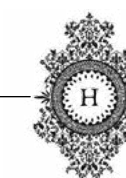
Frosting

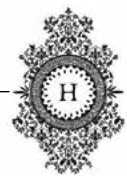
- Use an electric mixture and beat butter.
- Add sifted icing sugar and incorporate with butter.
- Mix in vanilla extract and milk.
- Add a drop or two (as needed) of green food colouring.
- Use a piping bag to decorate your cupcakes.

EXTRA-NESS(additions for serving)

- Add Rainbow Sugar Strips to arch across the cupcakes
- Use white frosting on the borders of the rainbow to replicate clouds
- Gold cupcake liners to replicate a pot of gold
- Pot of Gold Cupcake Topper by Jazz It Up! Celebrations (@jazzitup.celebrations)

Dessert





Could Trudeau Be Sending You an Affectionate Letter?

Jessica Colacci
SATIRE



Photographed is PM Justin Trudeau writing to a Canadian in need saying: “This JUST-IN, I TRU(ly) care about you at this time. Stay strong XOXO.”

In ongoing developments and continued requests for aid during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is also a strong demand for affection and care. Many Canadians feel more alone than ever and whilst financial aid is appreciated, Trudeau feels there is a more essential need at this time. Whilst rent deductions, increased housing services, and support for those losing their livelihoods could be beneficial, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has a certain number of priorities to tend to. Thus, he is pulling out the stationery and washi tape and getting straight to business.

Over the past few months, Trudeau has been working day and night; an unstoppable and crafty force he has become. He cares to make every card unique and special to every Canadian in need. Some of these letters include paintings, glitter, expressive poetry, etc. Financial resources for these expenses have also created a shift in Canada’s budget, but this is not a pressing issue in his perspective. What is important and essential at this time is acquiring more decal stickers and aesthetically pleasing stamps.

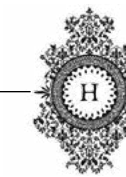
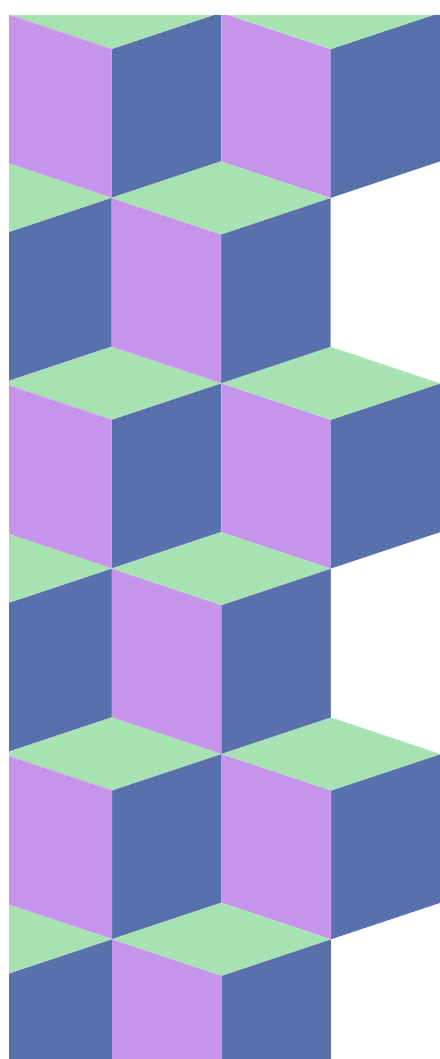
These letters are being written exclusively to every Canadian that is receiving EI benefits at this time. They have not reached the homes of EI recipients yet, but he assures that they are well worth the wait. A Canadian survey has predicted that not only will this boost the hearts and aspirations of Canadians, but it will also exponentially inspire and evoke a beautiful ripple effect and create a pay-it-forward crafty movement.

The exclusion of Canadians that are not receiving EI does cause a bit of a stir. Aubrey Drake Graham, Canadian rapper, singer, songwriter and actor on the acclaimed show *Degrassi*, holds issue with this. Drake, a Canadian who is not receiving EI benefits, is heartbroken to know that he cannot receive love and admiration through a handwritten card by Trudeau. He feels that everybody deserves love and has speculated that he’ll express his emotion about this heartbreak in his next album said to release soon.



Photographed here is 6ix God Drake himself expressing a very emotional response to this recent development on Trudeau’s part. “For someone who is the ‘Certified Lover Boy,’ I sure do not feel the love,” says acclaimed actor from hit TV show *Degrassi*.

As the world deals with the pain, hurt, and despair that this pandemic has brought, there is finally a certain hope that maybe, in this dark and unprecedented time, there is the light of holographic stickers and handwritten notes to make it all okay. ♦



Trendy Ways to Waste Your Time

Lovisa Hansen
SATIRE

In order to be ahead of the curve, it’s important to be aware of trends, and in the last few years, the trend of productivity has been flooding the media sphere. Unfortunately, despite it being the year of the Ox, productivity is no longer “it.” Since you don’t want to be the last person on earth still waking up at 5 am, it’s essential to break out of those habits. Throw away your Stephen Covey; here are some trendy tips on how you can blissfully waste away your days.

Read a Book

This might seem counterintuitive since books are famously known for being a good use of time. However, books are long and boring, making them really hard to get through. Look at the covers and choose the prettiest. Then read through half of *The Odyssey* and wonder why you didn’t start with *The Iliad*.

Play Uno

In 2020, *The Queen’s Gambit* caused a surge of Chess playing, and this year scientists are predicting Uno to be the new really cool thing to do. Luckily, unlike Chess, Uno makes no sense and will take you months (for some, years) to understand (MAT137 would be a recommended prerequisite).



Learn How to Crochet

In case you haven’t heard, it’s now chic to wear your grandmother’s table runner as a crop top. Crochet is really cool and really difficult. This makes it the perfect hobby to take up as finals are near. Try to crochet a cardigan and watch it fall apart right in time for your GPA to do the same.

Polish Silver

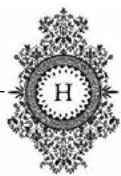
The number of articles and Instagram memes about the stock market might have tricked you into thinking that you should maybe try to understand it. Learning about stocks is unfortunately really boring and, just like the coins you earn playing Mario Kart, it’s hard to know if it’s even real. Instead, put effort into all the silver you probably have laying around the house (they say it’s a student essential), and polish it.

Watch *The Real Housewives*

The critical discussion surrounding the Marvel Universe has expanded so far that it has become a course of its own. I, for one, am excited for when the Cinema Studies faculty finally gets around to what is perhaps the most culturally significant cinematic universe of them all: *The Real Housewives*. Why is this show more important than ever? It’s not. It does however span over 10 cities, and watching all the seasons of even one of them is going to take you far enough down the rabbit hole that by the time you’re out you can apply to be on the show yourself. In which case, those silver polishing skills are really going to come in handy. ♦



Time



Graduates’ Favourite Moments at UofT/Innis

Courtesy of The Innis Herald Readers

- “2016 Frosh and meeting lifelong friends at Innis... along with feeding the squirrels on campus.”
—Jasmine Kara

“The bbq going up in flames at orientation 2018.”
—Sannie Chie

“ICSS Commuter food events.”
—Xi Huang

“Watching Blue Planet until 3am with my friends in their tiny dorm room”
—Anna Pan

“Going to the ROM on a free Tuesday and taking funny photos with my friends”
—Hayley Vlcek
- “Going to the formal that Tony and I planned together or second year Innis Bang”
—Breanna Lima Martinez

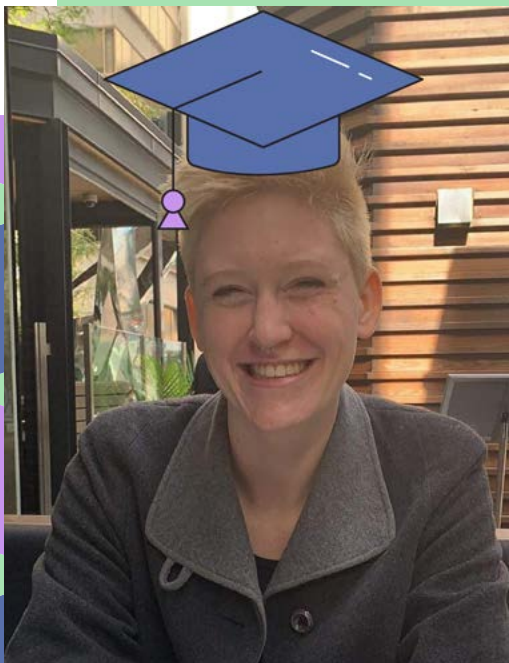
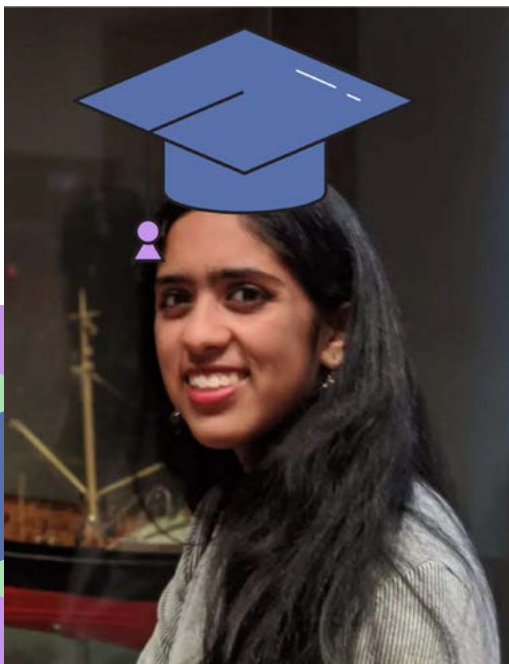
“The Lunar New Year Gala I planned with WCSA two years ago”
—Tony Niu

“My first time skiing at blue mountain”
—Kenny Trinh

“My friend doing drag for a Halloween party”
—Kavan Liang

“Witnessing my friend drink milk straight from the bag”
—Lance Oribello

Graduating Masthead Members



Masthead Sign-off

The Innis Herald masthead team would like to thank you for supporting us throughout the 2020-21 school year. Our transition from a traditional print paper to a completely digital publication was not always easy. Nonetheless, your readership makes the countless hours and late nights worth it. We are especially grateful for our wonderful contributors who brought our issues to life. Volume VII featured so much innovation, insight, and inspiration. We hope you enjoyed all the amazing content and continue following us as we grow.

The Innis Herald has given a voice to the students of Innis College and the University of Toronto since 1965. We circulate our paper to Innis students, alumni, faculty, and anyone else who happens to come across it.

We are committed to covering stories that matter to students. Our content aims to help students connect to their college, campus, city, and world.

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